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"NO MUSIC IN THEIR SOULS"

"The man who hath no music in his soul,
And is not moved by concord of sweet
sounds
Is fit for treason, strategem and spoils.
Let no man trust him."

There can be, of course, no direct application of the last two lines of the "Immortal William's" quatrain, above quoted, to those capable artists Francis Newton and Childe Hassam. They recently "hailed to court" Mrs. Richard T. Wilson, a co-tenant and neighbor in the studio apartment building of which they are all occupants, on the charge that the late musicales she gave in her own apartment disturbed them, and the quatrain comes irresistibly to mind.

We should have thought that Mr. Hassam, at least, who has been called a "Poet in Color," was a lover of music—we know nothing of Mr. Newton's musical tastes.

The "cloud of witnesses," social lights and music lovers, including Messrs. Frank Munsey and Louis Wiley, by their testimony as to the harmlessness of Mrs. Wilson's musicales and their comparative low "concord of sweet sounds," quickly won her case, and Messrs. Newton and Hassam were defeated.

Without full knowledge of the merits of the case, we are inclined to agree with the published opinion of a prominent feminine witness in the court, that the two artists were "fussy." Childe Hassam and Francis Newton "fussy!" What an indictment!

POESY IN LANDSCAPES

"It is just about a generation ago that the group of landscape painters, of whom J. Francis Murphy, who has just died, was easily one of the leaders, began to make their impression on American collectors. It has now come about that the works which they produced and produce command higher prices at art sales than are obtained for the best examples of the Barbizon school, whose output at one time dominated American collections.

"At the time that Murphy began to depict poesy in American landscapes, which was supposed to be foreign to our scenery and our sentiment, the average buyer of pictures felt that the European cachet was the only thing that determined value in a canvas of any kind. Moreover, it was assumed that the misty, vaporous effects so familiar in French landscapes, effects due wholly to the climatic conditions, were, in fact, the imaginative contribution of master artists, who saw landscapes through personality and temperament in a way that was forever forbidden to the American painter.

"Consequently, when men like the elder Inness revealed that there was a glamour and a rare beauty in the American countryside, and when the younger group led by Murphy also discovered that, despite our higher sun, our clearer atmosphere, our bluer sky and our general absence of watery, cloud-enveloped vistas and washed out landscapes with gray the predominant color note, our own intimate countryside views could be invested with a rich human interest in which the poetry of all outdoors was revealed in lovely color and ingratiating design, it was not long before recognition came and the American landscape took its proper place in current art the world over.

"That the dead artist's type of mind should incline him to paint the mellow languors of the early autumn and golden haze of that halcyon period of the year denoted as "Indian Summer" did not by any means indicate that he had a super-sugary recipe for landscapes in order to suggest sentiment. On the contrary, every season was his and he did not fear the problems caused by the greater brilliancy of outdoor effects in America, which make the most subjective of American landscapes seem hard to those who accept the European conventions as the determining thing in nature studies. That we are emancipated from all this, and that the test of the sales indicates that the American buyer decides on general artistic merit and not on manufactured prejudices is due in large measure to the kind of thing that Murphy stood for in his art from the days of his first triumph in 1887 to the present universal recognition of him as one who saw beauty in the simplest vistas of a countryside which he redeemed in transcribing.—Harvey M. Watts in Phila. Public Ledger.

CORRESPONDENCE

Woman Painter Answers Critic

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS,

Dear sir: After reading the criticism in the Sunday Tribune of Feb. 27, last, on "Women Painters, and a Visitor" is it less Majeste to ask what is the matter with the Tribune's august art critic?

A fair criticism is only possible as the outcome of an open mind and a discerning eye—especially the open mind. It does not consist of platitudes, strung together with advice suitable to a decade ago, and interspersed with, quite undeserved—and uncommonly hard knocks, and apologetic postscripts, to ease those same hard knocks. Note, for example, such platitudes as "A good painter is a good painter, regardless of sex. Sex has nothing to do with it." How incontrovertibly true. And again—"It is the common fault of all large groups to settle down to the average of the rank and file." Of necessity true—the world down the ages, has produced but few geniuses—in art or in criticism.

And the well meant advice—a gem, if needed. "It would be a good thing if the N. A. W. P. & S. would consider the idea of making it as hard to get a picture into one of its shows as to drive a dromedary through the eye of a needle." They are trying to do that very thing, Mr. Critic, and it may be possible next year to persuade you, and a fellow critic or two, to serve as a jury. I am sure of one picture, yes, just one is allowed to hang, the "Women Painters" will pride themselves on giving to the world one great work, approved of by the critics, and through them, by the public—no matter what the painters themselves think. The painters only paint pictures, anyway, they don't know anything about them, except what the critics tell them.

And now for a knock or two—"The thirtieth annual exhibition (of Women Painters, etc.) which should have demonstrated its

usefulness, has not quite done so." Thanks for the "quite." It softens a blow to the Women Painters and Sculptors, which should put its useless thirty years career out of existence. And now for the second knock out—"The exhibition, in short, is portentously dull," followed by a remorseful remark to the slain—"Those Artists of genuine ability, (how many does it take to keep an exhibition from being portentously dull?), who take part, are almost obliterated," etc. One artist of genuine ability might reconcile a painter to a whole exhibition, but a critic, alas. And Mr. Critic winds up by wondering why—"We shall go on wondering why there is not chance enough in the various miscellaneous shows for any ordinary painter, man or woman." A splendid finale to a most remarkable criticism—which sounds to an "ordinary painter" more as if it were the result of an attack of indigestion, than a fair, unbiased criticism of one of N. Y.'s early shows of importance. This year a show well hung, fairly impressive, speaking plainly of an honest attempt at a high average, and with all of the failures incident to any big attempt.

And there is every reason in the world why artists and women artists, if you like, should have some exhibition of the kind. N. Y. has too few, so called, "miscellaneous exhibitions." The Academy is a joke—thousands of pictures sent, and some 300 hung, and yet, one of the whys of the Woman's show, passes this Critic's understanding.

C. C. M.

N. Y., Mar. 2, 1921.

ART BOOK REVIEW

THE BOOK OF A HUNDRED HANDS, by George B. Bridgman. The first of its kind ever published—a book entirely on the hand. Edward C. Bridgman, Publisher of Books at Pelham, New York.

George B. Bridgman, instructor in drawing and lecturer on the construction and anatomy of the human figure at the Art Students' League, and the author of Constructive Anatomy, has now written and published a volume on hands, in which he cites 100 examples of hands.

The history of the hand in art includes the hands of Egyptian mummies, those of the cave dwellers, the ancient Peruvians, the Aztecs, the American Indians, the conceptions of the Alaskans, as reflected on their totem poles, the Assyrians, and a long train of other hands.

The face is generally selected as the medium of expression, but in the present Bridgman volume it is revealed, as perhaps never before, that the hand has an individuality all its own, and that much expression impossible in the face belongs to the hand.

There are many types of hands, which fact becomes manifest just as soon as the study of the hand is taken up. There are also varying ways of expressing the hand. The archaic hand differs essentially from what we may venture to designate the jazz hand, and there you are. The use of the hand modifies it in a pronounced fashion. The infant hand represents one extreme also, while the hand of senility is in the antithesis. The finger prints remain without change, however, and this face has been made useful by criminologists through the Bertillon system.

The illustrations in the present volume constitute its chief feature, and by means of these light is shed upon the hand and its development. Here one sees the back of the hand, its front, and side views; the square hand, the round, compact, long, short, thick, thin, the male and female hand.

The reader is made familiar with the muscles, the fingers, and even the lines of the palms that mean so much to Cheirosophists. The thumb side is presented many times and in many aspects. The same is true of the little finger. In short, the hand is presented from A to Z.

OBITUARY

Eugene Burnand

Those who had the advantage of his friendship say that Eugene Burnand recently dead in Paris, was an incomparable character. His exceptional right-mindedness was apparent in his work. At the last Salon he showed a large landscape, a ploughing scene which was praised in the Art News for its fine qualities. The Swiss character (Burnand came from Canton de Vaud) is not given to fantasy, nor does it splash its heart on its palette. He was an even, methodical, dexterous painter, more desirous of interpreting the significance of what he saw than of what he felt. The soldier-types he displayed at Brunner's gallery in Paris last Winter contribute one of the most interesting pages to the iconography of the war. He had illustrated some of the works of Mistral at the poet's request and the museum of Lausanne has a fine animal picture from his brush. He studied at the Beaux Arts under Gerome.

Stage settings by Paul Chalfin, constructed by Howard Higgin, are shown at the Rivoli Theatre. W. J. Benda, the artist and illustrator, has also become interested in stage work. His Greek masks have become features at the Rivoli and Rialto. It was after many offers and experiments with other artists that the management of the theatres finally decided upon Benda as the best fitted to carry out their programs.

LONDON LETTER

London, Mar. 2, 1921.

It is not often that one is able to accord enthusiastic appreciation to the modern artist in stained glass. But the memorial window for Lahore Cathedral, which has been carried out by Leonard Walker, and now on view at the Fine Art Society in Bond Street, raises one's hopes for the future of this branch of the arts, more than anything of the kind seen for many a day. Cleverly avoiding both ultra-modernism and a weak reliance upon mere tradition, the artist has succeeded in achieving something proper to his own time, yet respecting that which has gone before. The glass is rich and of the depth (as opposed to brilliance) that one associates with the finest examples of Mediaeval times. In another room is a memorial exhibition of the work of the late F. H. Townsend, art editor of "Punch" for many years. The drawings are those of a man who, while just missing the touch of genius that would have sent his name down to posterity with that of the great humorist draughtsmen, he yet produced undeniably sound and solid work, never forcing the fun nor scamping the composition. His figure drawing was exceedingly accomplished.

A Bill to Benefit Artists

There is a distinct feeling afoot here that it would be well to emulate, on behalf of British artists, the bill now before the Belgian Parliament, dealing with a plan to hand over to living artists a certain percentage on the price paid at auction on their pictures, subsequent to their original sale. Although it is usually after the death of an artist that the great appreciation in price takes place, yet there have been many notable instances of late of this rise in current valuation taking place during the painter's lifetime. Such an instance was that in which Sir William Orpen's "Mirror," originally sold for 35 guineas, fetched as much as £500 a few years later. It may be urged that in such cases the artist is so far on the path to fame that he no longer needs such a percentage upon his early work, but at the same time there would appear to be no valid reason to urge why the whole profit should go to those who had no part in the picture's making. It is quite probable that some legislation of the kind will eventually mature.

The interest displayed just now in tapestries, will be still further increased by the splendid exhibition of textiles at present on at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The French Government has lent for a Franco-British exhibition examples of the finest work produced by the Gobelins and Savonnerie factories, as well as the famous 16th Century tapestries from the Rheims Cathedral, woven at Tournai. King George has lent Flemish work of the same period, depicting classic myths, while such collections as those of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, the Dukes of Rutland and Buccleuch, have also been drawn upon.

Exhibitions Now On

There is great versatility in the work of Ethelbert White, now shown at the Paterson and Carfax Gallery at 5 Old Bond St. W., for the artist appears to be as greatly interested in his figure studies as in his landscapes and atmospheric effects. Further, he has a sense of humor, profoundly to be appreciated, and a feeling for color which permits him to give the former full play.

Exhibition has never followed exhibition with the rapidity of today. And moreover, so many of the shows are of such real interest and importance that it is quite a difficult matter to fit into the week's round all that would well repay a visit. At the Goupil Gallery there is at present a most exotic Gauguin, entitled "Nevermore," wherein a Lady of Tahiti disports herself within her home, while without, strange figures add to the allure of the composition. Negroid sculpture also looms large in this exhibition, reminding one of the joke perpetrated some time ago by one of our most eminent critics, who remarked that one must speak of "Negroid antics" rather than of "Negroid antiques," a term which justly describes the character of many of the works. There is certainly something curiously weird and impressive about these ingenuous carvings, but one reflects, even a child's drawing, in which the arms sprout from the neck and the eyes look in all directions at once, possesses a similar curious quality. The vogue, however, for this very primitive form of art is steadily on the increase, but whether it is destined to endure is quite another matter.

At the United Arts Gallery, 23a Old Bond Street, there are several works by Fantin Latour, as well as two by Isabey, all of which well repay a visit. In spite of a certain restlessness characteristic of the work of the latter artist, there is a dignity about it which was not to be found among many of his contemporaries, for 1848, the date of the smaller work, here exhibited, was a difficult transition time between 18th century tradition and later 19th century ideas. The Fantin-Latours make perhaps a more direct appeal.

When American visitors come to town this Spring there will be no necessity for them to visit the Royal Exchange to study the panel by Frank O. Salisbury of "The Great West Steps," which was unveiled a few days ago by the Duke of York. One would rather have had a veil drawn over it than one drawn away, for the work really gives a worse impression of English modern art than it deserves.

L. G. S.